

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending.

Claim 11 has been amended to more clearly describe the invention.

In the Office Action, claims 11-20 were rejected under 35 USC 101 for nonstatutory subject matter. Claim 11 has been amended to clearly state that the present electronic publication is "stored and executed on at least one computer". Thus, the present functionally descriptive material is now recorded on some computer readable medium. It therefore believed that the 35 USC 101 rejection of claim 11 has been overcome. Claims 12-20 depend from claim 11 and are considered allowable for at least the same reasons.

Also in the Office Action, claims 1-3, 5, 8-9, 11-13, 15, 18 and 19 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by PTO 892 Reference U ("Craig's List"). Claims 4 and 14 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious in view of Craig's List. Claims 6 and 16 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) for obviousness over Craig's List in view of PTO 892 Reference V ("Net News"). Claims 7 and 17 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) for obviousness over Craig's List in view of U.S. Published Patent Application No. 2002/0007324 ("Centner"). Claims 10 and 20 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) for obviousness over Craig's List in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,727,156 issued to Herr-Hoyman, et al. ("Herr"). Each of these rejections is traversed.

The present invention discloses an electronic bulletin board that allows a single organization to publish all of its requirements so that producers, service providers and other "vendors" can view the organization's requirements. The requirements listed in the present solicitation bulletin board are those of a single buyer, meaning the same buyer purchases every item listed in the bulletin board. No fee is charged for listing requirements in the present publication, as the buyer (organization) administers the bulletin board. Further, no members of the public are allowed to post listings in the present publication. Moreover, the present electronic publication provides vendors with editable electronic forms, including requests for information, quotes and proposals, that allow the vendor to initiate negotiations with the buyer.

For large requirements, such as installation of a heating and air conditioning system, vendors can register with the present electronic publication and the vendors will be sent electronic updates regarding changes to the requirement.

Claim 1, for example, recites "electronically publishing a buyer's requirements in an electronic publication that provides vendors with information needed to business with the buyer comprising the steps of: categorizing the buyer's requirements wherein each category includes one or more items required by the buyer, and further wherein an item is a product or service required by the buyer; posting all forms and information necessary for the vendor in a format that allows editing of the forms by the vendors and creating a registration section that allows vendors to register with the buyer, wherein after registration the vendors can received electronic notifications concerning any item specified....".

Craig's List teaches an electronic version of the classified "ads" (advertisement(s), hereinafter "ads" or "ad"). Members of the public place ads in Craig's List, just as they would in the classified ad section of their local newspaper. However, instead of their ad being published in the local paper, the ad is published on the Internet, in the Craig's List website. The website is divided into categories, just as the classified ad section of the paper. The vast majority of the items listed on Craig's List are offered for sale, and not for purchase. Sellers with items listed for sale in the most popular categories of Craig's List are charged a fee for publication. Moreover, since Craig's List publishes ads that are placed by the public, there are, generally speaking, different buyers and sellers for every item listed in the publication. In a classic buyer-seller relationship, Craig's List is a third party that serves the needs of many sellers and many buyers. The third party facilitator provided by Craig's List is not needed in the present electronic bulletin board.

Craig's List fails to disclose electronically publishing a buyer's requirements in an electronic publication that provides vendors with information needed to business with the buyer comprising the steps of: categorizing the buyer's requirements wherein each category includes one or more items required by the buyer, and further wherein an item is a product or

service required by the buyer; posting all forms and information necessary for the vendor in a format that allows editing of the forms by the vendors and creating a registration section that allows vendors to register with the buyer, wherein after registration the vendors can received electronic notifications concerning any item specified.

Net News teaches an on-line auction website, similar to e-bay, that is available to the public. Both, buyers and sellers are required to register with the website, if they want to conduct business in Net News. The needs of thousands of buyers are met by the service provided in Net News. Further, the multiple buyers in Net News are responding to items listed for sale, not for purchase, in the publication. Net News teaches away from the present invention by requiring registration of both buyers and sellers. Registration of buyers is not an issue in the present invention, as there is only one buyer. Further, requiring sellers to register prior to conducting business might discourage some sellers.

Net News fails to disclose electronically publishing a buyer's requirements in an electronic publication that provides vendors with information needed to business with the buyer comprising the steps of: categorizing the buyer's requirements wherein each category includes one or more items required by the buyer, and further wherein an item is a product or service required by the buyer; and creating a registration section that allows vendors to register with the buyer, wherein after registration the vendors can received electronic notifications concerning any item specified.

Centner teaches a web-based service for buyers and sellers. The buyers set up accounts with the Centner service and each account includes a list of preferred suppliers. Posted listings from the buyers are sent out directly to the preferred suppliers associated with each buyer. The buyers' accounts are stored on Centner service hardware, and the Centner service is responsible for administration of the accounts. Thus access to the accounts is not limited to the buyers. Centner is another third party that assists in the seller-buyer relationship.

Centner failes to disclose electronically publishing a buyer's requirements in an electronic publication that provides vendors with information needed to business with the buyer

.... comprising the steps of: categorizing the buyer's requirements wherein each category includes one or more items required by the buyer, and further wherein an item is a product or service required by the buyer; posting all forms and information necessary for the vendor in a format that allows editing of the forms by the vendors and creating a registration section that allows vendors to register with the buyer, wherein after registration the vendors can received electronic notifications concerning any item specified.

Herr teaches a simple method for protecting hypertext documents once they have been uploaded to a server and made available to others via the Internet. The method involves the use of a unique identifier, and subsequent password, that are given to a document's author. Subsequent access to the document, for modification purposes, can only be obtained with the author's password.

Herr fails to disclose electronically publishing a buyer's requirements in an electronic publication that provides vendors with information needed to business with the buyer comprising the steps of: categorizing the buyer's requirements wherein each category includes one or more items required by the buyer, and further wherein an item is a product or service required by the buyer; posting all forms and information necessary for the vendor in a format that allows editing of the forms by the vendors and creating a registration section that allows vendors to register with the buyer, wherein after registration the vendors can received electronic notifications concerning any item specified.

The teachings of Net News, Centner and Herr do not make up for the deficiencies of Craig's List. None of the references teach a system wherein a buyer publishes his own needs in an electronic bulletin board, and everything listed in the bulletin board is purchased by the same buyer. The combination of Craig's List, Net News, Centner and Herr due not teach, and in fact teach away from, the present electronic bulletin board, as recited in claim 1. Each reference is directed toward a third party that serves the needs of sellers and multiple buyers. For all of the above reasons, claim 1 is considered allowable over any combination of Craig's List, Net News, Centner and Herr. Claims 2-10 depend from claim 1 and are considered allowable for at least

the same reasons. Claim 11 recites similar features as claim 1 and is considered allowable for at least the same reasons. Claims 12-20 depend from claim 11 and are considered allowable for at least the same reasons.

All claims are believed to be in condition for allowance, and a Notice to that effect is respectfully requested. If any questions remain, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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